

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Re-examination and favorable reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following comments are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 - 28 are pending in the application. Currently, claims 11, 13, and 18 - 28 stand allowed; claims 1, 9, 10, 12, and 14 stand rejected; and claims 2 - 8 and 15 - 17 stand objected to.

By the present amendment, claim 1 has been cancelled, claims 2, 7 and 15 have been placed into independent form, claims 3, 9, 10, and 17 have been amended to change their dependency, and claim 14 has been amended.

In the office action mailed October 4, 2004, claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This rejection has been overcome by changing the dependency of claim 12 to method claim 11.

Further in the office action, claims 1, 9, 10, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,905,588 to Hara. This rejection has been obviated by the present response. Claim 1 has been cancelled and claims 9 and 10 now depend from claim 2. With respect to claim 14, it has been amended to call for "said flange contact members being inserted into said at least one recess." It is submitted that the flange contact members in Fig. 5 of Hara are not inserted into any recess. For this reason, claim 14 is now in condition for allowance.

There being no other grounds of rejection, the instant application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Such allowance is respectfully solicited.

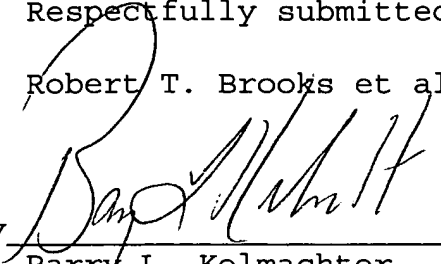
Should the Examiner believe an additional amendment is needed to place the case in condition for allowance, he is

hereby invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge the additional independent claim fee of \$400.00 to Deposit Account No. 21-0279. Should the Director determine that an additional fee is due, he is hereby authorized to charge said fee to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: January 4, 2005

I, Nicole Motzer, hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: "Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313" on January 4, 2005.

